

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, MNUC, GW, MILI

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHING EARLY RELATIONS WITH FRG

MINISTER OF DEFENSE LEBER FOR SECRETARY-
DESIGNATE RUMSFELD

REFS: A) STATE 265519; B) BONN 18346; C) BONN 18209

1. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, (REF C) FRG MINISTER OF DEFENSE GEORG LEBER BELIEVED THAT HE HAD ESTABLISHED A CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER. HE ALSO WISHES, OF COURSE, TO DEVELOP SUCH A RELATIONSHIP WITH SECRETARY-DESIGNATE RUMSFELD. LEBER BELIEVES THAT AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN US AND GERMAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS AT THE MOST SENIOR LEVELS IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF THE COORDINATION OF OUR DEFENSE POLICIES, WHICH IN TURN ARE CRUCIAL TO THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE NATO ALLIANCE.

2. WHILE LEBER UNDERSTANDS THE REASONS WHY WE REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT OF THE NPG MEETING (REFS A & B), HE IS OBVIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED THAT THIS WILL PROBABLY DELAY THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE SECRETARY-DESIGNATE. MOREOVER, WE HAVE BEEN GETTING MIXED SIGNALS FROM SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE REGARDING THE NPG

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POSTPONEMENT: SOME HAVE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDINGQ

WHEREAS OTHERS HAVE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE DISAPPOINTMENT (AND HAVE RECALLED THAT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER MET WITH HIS COLLEAGUES AT THE JUNE, 1973, DPC BEFORE HE WAS CONFIRMED).

3. WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE WISE FOR OUR SIDE TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP IN MOVING TOWARD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MINISTER LEBER AND SECRETARY-DESIGNATE RUMSFELD. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS WHICH WE MIGHT CONSIDER, AND WE SUBMIT THEM IN THE BELIEF THAT THE DETERMINING FACTOR AS TO WHICH ONE WE CHOOSE MUST BE WASHINGTON RATHER THAN BONN CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-DESIGNATE RECALLING EARLIER ASSOCIATIONS AND EXPRESSING THE SECRETARY-DESIGNATE'S HOPE FOR CLOSE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION.

(B) AS PART OF SUCH A NOTE, THE SECRETARY-DESIGNATE MIGHT INVITE MINISTER LEBER TO MEET WITH HIM PRIVATELY IN THE COURSE OF THE NATO MINISTERIAL SESSION NEXT MONTH.

(C) AS PART OF OPTION (A) ABOVE, THE SECRETARY-DESIGNATE MIGHT INDICATE THAT HE WOULD HOPE THAT HE COULD MEET WITH MINISTER LEBER IN THE EVENT THAT THE MINISTER MIGHT SOON COME TO THE UNITED STATES IN ORDER TO INSPECT GERMAN FORCES BEING TRAINED IN AMERICA. WE HAVE HAD SOME INDICATIONS FROM LEBER'S STAFF THAT THE MINISTER IS CONSIDERING SUCH A TRIP AND MIGHT WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE SECRETARY-DESIGNATE IN THE COURSE OF SUCH A TRIP.

HILLENBRAND

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